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SERMON

UPON THE

UNION

OF THE

Two Kingdoms,

Preached in the Parish Church of

St. Andrew Holborn,

May the 1st, 1707.

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Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

L O N D O N:

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Rom. xiv. Ver. 19.

Let us therefore follow after the Things which make for Peace, and Things wherewith one may edifie another.

THE Union of the Two Kingdoms, which is the Subject and Occasion of our present Thanksgivings, is an unquestionable Blessing as to our Temporal and National Concerns; if we may form a Judgment of such Blessings, by what has been long in the Counsels and Wisdom of our Governours; and in the Wishes and Desires of all, who in a long Succession of Time, have been look'd upon as the most prudent, moderate, and most peaceable Persons amongst us.

But farther, if we will estimate a Temporal Blessing, by the Opposition our Greatest Enemies have always made against it, namely, that Union which is now brought to a Conclusion in these our Days; we have a further Argument of the Blessing of it; for happily to have accomplished that Design, which our Enemies have always industriously obstructed, must needs be the Character of a Publick and Temporal Blessing, if Humane Nature, and the general Sense of Kingdoms may be allow'd to judge of what is Good and Advantageous to themselves.

What ill Managements there may be of a present Blessing, or what ill Consequences may flow from it, by the Passions and Vices of Men, whom nothing will please; whose Tempers are so bad, that they are ready to spoil and pervert

kindest Providences that are vouchsafed us ; these Considerations do not alter the Nature and Design of the Blessing ; but only argue what Freedom and Dominion Man in this State of Trial, is permitted to have over his own Resolutions and Actions ; and that all Temporal Good Things are thereby under such an Uncertainty, that our greatest Wisdom cannot master ; but our Patience, after the using of our best Endeavours, must submit to.

The Kingdom of *Scotland* has been a very Ancient Kingdom, under a Monarchical Government, of a long Series of Kings, who have seldom changed their Line : The sharp Hostilities we have had with that Neighbouring People, were as early as we have any History of these Parts : The *Picts* and *Scots* were most formidable Enemies to this Kingdom, even when they had the *Roman Legions* to assist them ; and to guard against them, threw this Nation into such Measures, as only a desperate People are wont to take, who are ready to think that there is no Calamity, but that present one, which they would avoid.

And tho' the *Saxon Revolution* happen'd in some Years to settle into a much better State of Things than what they found when they were first call'd in ; yet there was a black Scene of Barbarity and Infidelity, before Things clear'd up into such a Union as different Principalities may be suppos'd to admit of, which afterwards came to a total Conversion of the *Saxons* to the Christian Faith, and at last to an intire Union of the *Heptarchy* into one Regal Government.

But still the *Scotch Nation* was our near and neighbouring Mischief, ready to augment any Foreign

reign Distress, or to heighten any Domestick Troubles: 'Twas a rough Engin, fitted upon all Occasions to molest us, especially as it was managed by the Policies of *France*. And tho' it was often the Theatre of our Victories, as well as the Exercise of our Valour; yet we met with such brave and almost equal Foes, that in most of our Battles, we left a great deal of our *English* Blood behind us.

Above 400 Years ago, in the Reign of *Edward I.* the Union of these Kingdoms was in a fair Probability, brought on by the Necessity of their own Affairs, and the high Renown of the Prince, who then govern'd this Kingdom; but there quickly emerged a Spirit of Valour and of new Counsel amongst them; the Genius of the Nation revived in the Family of the *Bruces*, and they presently fought off that *Homage*, which they thought they had been betray'd into; and they found by the Event, that the *Fate* of their Kingdom, as some foolishly fancied, did not depend upon the *Stone-Chair*, in which their Kings were crown'd, and which was taken from them; but rather on the Iron they wore by their Sides, and the strong Arms wherewith they managed it.

Marriages were set on foot to compass the same National Union, to calm the Differences of the Two Kingdoms, tho' some of them died in the Project, and were the Cause of fiercer Hostilities; but that which was compleated in the Daughter of *Henry VII.* was the true Original of that Blessing we now enjoy; tho' it was somewhat long before we found any of its good Effects: Till at last it became the undoubted Title and the high Advantage of one of their own Kings, to enoble

his own Nation, by wearing of our Crown; where by he was able to make 'em *One Court*, tho' he could never attain to make 'em *One Kingdom*: That peculiar Happiness was reserved for a *Descendant* of his; who, at the latter End of the *Line*, begins a new Glory; in whom nothing ends but the Misery of *Europe*, and the Animosities of the Two Kingdoms; *She* being the Original of a new Empire, as to Union; and having laid the Foundation of such a Civil Peace and Agreement, as may, by wise and gentle Means, be happily extended into a Union of *Religion* too; and be made perhaps the first sure Step towards the Opening of the blessed *Millennium*.

This is the Union that we now give Thanks for; this is the Accomplishment of that Undertaking which has been too unweildly for the Counsels of so many Ages, but has readily yielded to the Wisdom of this. For Two Nations of long Hostility, of warm Emulations, of fix'd and Hereditary Disgusts; and whose bitter Passions have been anew fermented by a Civil War, and by lately entring into different Measures of Government and Religion; for Two such Nations to be brought to join their Imperial Honours into *One*, and to submit all their contrary Designs to one Interest, is a Management peculiar to the Prudence and Temper of this Reign, and its *present Ministry*; and surely none, but that most *Gracious Person*, to whom *both* the Thrones were so nearly ally'd, and in whom all the Excellencies of Government, and all the Felicity of Success are *already united*, could have had Charms enough to conciliate, and Wisdom and Power enough to establish so wonderful a Union.

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The remaining Part therefore of my Discourse shall be to lay down some Rules and Considerations as may be most conducing to make this Union a Blessing indeed: Which I shall endeavour to do, by applying the Apostle's Advice in the Text, to the Circumstances of our present Affairs; *Let us follow after the Things which make for Peace, and wherewith one may edifie another.*

1st, Let all National Satyrs, all Proverbs of Reproach and Scorn be laid aside, and utterly forgot; for they serve for no end, but to gratifie Mens private Passions, and to keep up and nourish bad Humours, which, upon Occasion, may break out into publick Disturbances.

National Characters have seldom so much Truth, as may justifie a wise Man's Use of them; they are for the most part disparaging, and Marks of Contempt, and grounded upon such hasty Conclusions, as have not Inductions enough to support them.

There are no Christian Countries so good, but have Vices enough to disgrace, not only their Religion, but the common Manners of a reasonable People; and there are none so bad, but they have some eminent Virtues, which may reflect an Honour upon them: They who are for putting Characters of Contempt upon meer *Climates*, have some Resemblance with the Pride of that *Alphonse*, who pretended to find fault with the present Make of the World, and express'd himself in such an arrogant Manner, as if he could have mended it.

The Northern Parts of the World have not been much magnified by the *Greeks* and *Romans*; but whenever those stout Warriors were pleas'd to

transplant their Colonies abroad, they made those Learned Gentlemen soon flie before 'em, with all their Arts and Sciences; which plainly shew'd, that tho' little Inventions and Amusements might, yet Military Valour requir'd not so much Sunshine, but that it could grow at the Foot of a Rock, and thrive near a cold Stream.

They were the Northern People, who overthrew the *Roman* Empire; and form'd so many of the Kingdoms which now flourish in the Western World; and the more Northern we go, the nearer we come to the Fountain-Head, from which so many Nations flow'd.

For us therefore to use any Proverbs of Reproach against our Neighbours of *Scotland*, comes methinks too near our selves, who are a Part of the same Island; and therefore we ought to be mutually concern'd in one another's Reputation, and never to countenance any reviling and ill-natur'd Reflections upon a *whole Body of People*; which only shews the Pride of those who use them; and stirs up the Resentment of those who are justly provoked by them.

It must be confess'd, that the seditious and treacherous Behaviour of many of that Kingdom, (of which our late Civil Wars gave us so sad an Experience) have rais'd such Prejudices in our Minds against 'em, as are very hardly to be removed: But we must consider, that the Calamity of a Civil War is not usually brought upon People without great Faults on both Sides; and that when such a War is once begun, it admits of no prescribed Bounds, and keeps not within those Measures, which the Beginners first designed: But the Confusion rowls on by its own Weight, gathering

thers new Reasons and Pretences, the longer it lasts; soon blasts all Gallantry of Actions, by cruel and treacherous Proceedings; and at last, throws all sober Counsels into one great Fire of Passion and Revenge.

Therefore we must look upon such a Season of Fermentation, as a Disease in the Body Politick, which had been long a gathering, and arose from many Seeds of Corruption; tho' it broke out in such a particular Time, and was fatal to such a particular Generation.

So that whenever we reflect upon that black Scene of Horror, we would do well to consider it more as a Calamity than as a Crime; as an Inflammation of Humours, more than a premeditated Design of Mischief; and that many were carried by the Force of the Torrent into such vile and desperate Actions, as, left to their Cooler Selves, they naturally abhorred.

However, let us, who view Things at a Distance, and without those Heats and Provocations, with which they acted them, entertain the most favourable Opinions, and make the fairest Constructions that such sad and grievous Things will bear; which I am sure is the best Way to prevent the Acting of such Tragedies again.

For if this Union of the Kingdoms can really unite us in Interests and Hearts, the few ambitious People who would willingly cause Dissensions amongst us, shall have no Tools to work with; and the Politicks of *France* and *Papery* shall have no Matter to play upon; their malicious Practices shall find no Entrance into our Kingdom; for when we once feel our United Happiness, we shall quickly grow too wise to be deluded, and too powerful to be disturbed,

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II. This is as yet, but a Union of Parliaments and Trade, and Temporal Interest, but not of Divine Worship and Ecclesiastical Government; however, by following *Things which make for Peace, and wherewith one may edify another*, we may by God's Blessing, come in time, to all that is desirable in such a Union too: And it will become us to live in such a Preparation of Minds and Hearts, that we may be ready to receive the Proposals of a Religious Agreement, when any fair Occasion shall be given, or any prudent Steps made towards it.

In order to this, we should study to excel in all the unquestionable Graces of the Gospel, especially in Humility, Candour, and Condescension; in Meekness of Wisdom, and mild Goodness, and universal Love. These Qualifications will help us to discern wherein true Religion does consist, and what will best serve to promote the real Honour of Christ and his Holy Gospel; and they will dispose us to fall easily into such Measures, as will best promote so good a Design.

We have had sufficient Experience, that harsh Methods will procure no true Union in Matters of Religion, they only constrain Men to Dissimulation and Hypocrisie, and to some little Arts of false Peace, but make real Work for Parties and Factions, for reciprocal Revenges, which mere humane Passions know no End of, and which nothing can terminate and put a Stop to, but a good prevailing Number of such truly religious, moderate, and grateful People as know themselves most providentially obliged to, and find themselves in a manner inspired with, such generous Intentions of a diffusive Good, and

such charming Sweetness of Virtue, as are most likely to heal a divided Nation, and to make it see and acknowledge its own *Spiritual* as well as Temporal Happiness.

When National Advantages lie in Common, and are equally dispensed to all who are sober and deserving, all little Differences in Religion will fall of themselves, which are chiefly kept up, not so much by separate Notions, as by separate Interests.

Let Care be taken that Men do not get Estates, nor wind themselves into Power, by maintaining of a Schism; and then the great Truths of the Gospel, both Doctrinal and Moral, will have such an Influence upon all Honest Hearts, will make their Tempers so humble and pious, their Worship of God so devout and solemn, that they will readily submit to, or perhaps not want any prescribed Ceremonies of Decence.

As People become more diligent in reading and studying the Scriptures, and viewing their Religion in the Purity of its Fountain; so they will become more and more out of Love with those particular Systems of *scholastic* Articles, which are the Enmity between Christian Nations, and that Partition-Wall which has hitherto divided them.

Were pure unmingled Christianity got into the Hearts of Men, were the noble and excellent Design of the Gospel, the ruling Principle of our Actions, and were the sovereign Remedy for lapsed Nature, taken into our Souls, without a Mixture of any contrary Ingredients, What would there be to hinder a new Civil or Moral Creation of the World? And what would there be to dis-
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countenance that Desire and Expectation of those who humbly meditate the Prophecies, namely, that there is a time a coming, in which all the Kingdoms of the Earth shall become *the Kingdom of Christ*.

We are perswaded that the *Spark* which may kindle into this great Glory here on Earth, lies in the *Protestant Churches*, tho' smother'd as yet with some unreasonable Weaknesses and Partialities; but when this Blindness in Part shall be done away, the Truth and Spirit of the Gospel is so great, that it will prevail.

When the Protestant Churches come once to be truly united, which we hope is in a fair Tendency, the Light of the Reform'd Religion, may come to such a Fulness and Strength, as may dart an almost miraculous Illumination on the obstinate Infidelity of the Jews, and on that dark Part of degenerate Christianity, the Church of *Rome*.

Whatever new State of the Church we either form in our Minds, or long for in our Hearts, we must never disturb *Governments* to obtain it; 'tis not God's approved Work to destroy his own Ordinance of Civil Powers, that He may build his Church on their Ruine; He is a God of Order, and wants no Confusions to carry on his Design.

It was a Maxim of the furious Anabaptists in *Germany*, that all *Magistrates* were Enemies to Christ, and must be destroy'd; but we have seen the wild Course of this *fiery Meteor*, and whither it tended, and abhor the Scandal it brought upon the reform'd Religion, and the Mischiefs it did to several Countries.

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We have liv'd to see that *Magistrates* can work Powerfully in God's Cause, and much more effectually promote it than *Enthusiasm* with all its Heats ; for publick Wisdom and Order have such a calm Strength, as continues and encreases, as conquers and enobles, as carries all before it, and leaves no Ruin behind.

Of this Nature is that *Union* we now celebrate ; it removes National Animosities, not by destructive Victories, and severe Laws ; but by making it their own Interest to combine ; it brings us into Friendships and mutual Commerce, that we may learn to view one another with Calmness, and to see without Passion, wherein we yet differ ; it gives us Opportunity and Leisure to *edifie* one another, by letting one another into the true Sentiments we have of Religion, that we may see what little things they are that yet keep us at a Distance ; and what ought to be duly amended ; and what to be Christianly born with, and endured.

The Government of the Church by *Bishops*, will not long continue to be such a frightful Thing to the common People of *Scotland*, when they shall be better acquainted with the Piety and Humility, as well as Learning, of those who are placed amongst us in that higher Order ; and when they shall have Patience to observe, what able and constant Enemies they are to the Corruption and Tyranny of the Church of *Rome* : whereas the Suspicion of being either a Part of that Tyranny, or ready to favour it, has been the main Prejudice against them.

The *Liturgy*, which was once unseasonably forced upon them, will have quite another Appearance, when they shall see the Regularity of our
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Worship, and how comely we serve God in full Congregations, and into what a solid, peaceable and lasting Piety it builds up those who frequently attend the publick Service.

When any of *Them* shall please to come into our orderly Assemblies, they will be better convinc'd of its excellent Use and Advantage, than Arguments and Writings can perswade em; when they perceive us glorifying of God, with one Heart and Mouth, in wholesome Forms of Praise and Prayer, and in the humble Posture of an Adoring People; *They too will fall down on their Knees, and worship God, and report, that God is in us, of a Truth,* 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

To conclude, let us study to improve all the Opportunities that are given us under the happy Government of our Gracious *Queen*, to become an united People in Church, as well as in State: Let us carefully observe all *those things that make for Peace*, and follow after them with Steadiness and Prudence.

She has put us into the true Way of Agreement, the mild, the condescending, the obliging Way: The only Way, by which the Truth and Peace of the Gospel are to be promoted: If this will not do, Men must be left to their own *Imaginations*, and answer for them at the Day of Judgment.

But in the mean time, *Government* must be kept up, and a *National Establishment* of Religion maintained; that whatever Indulgencies are allow'd, Anarchy and Enthusiasm may not break in upon us.

They know not the World, nor the Nature of Man, who fancy that there can be any publick
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Settlements or Administrations, as shall have no Imperfection in them: 'Tis an unspeakable Blessing, that we have *such*, as have few Defects attending them; none of which can ever be supply'd but by sweet and gentle Methods.

In a publick Establishment of Religion it is hard to prevent, but that Men of loose Principles, and of bad Morals, will take the Benefit and Protection of it; and do what we can to hinder, it will be made a Patronage for some formal Christians to shelter themselves under: But yet a *National Religion* will naturally oblige to such Decencies in the Externals of Worship, and to such Civil and Political Virtues, in common Life, as may render Men always capable of knowing better Things, and of being brought in time to the *inward Sense* and *Power* of Christianity. This is what we ought to aim at by our Exhortations and our Counsels, and by the most prevailing Argument of all, our own good Tempers and Lives.

This is the only Force we may use in Matters of pure Religion; the only Stratagem whereby we may truly advance the Kingdom of Christ. Let us work this Work of God, while we have Day and Opportunity before us; whilst we have a *Queen* on the Throne, who enlarges our Grandeur Abroad, and does all that is possible to establish our Quiet at Home.

Not only the Eyes of all *Europe*, but the Eyes of all the *Angels* in Heaven are upon us, to see what *Improvement* we shall make of this *Union* of the *Kingdoms*; and with what true Zeal we shall follow after the Things that make
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for Peace; and wherewith one may edifie ano-
ther.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and
God the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Glory, Pow-
er, Praise and Dominion, both now and for
evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.